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12 August 1958

Acting Chief, FED

Acting Chief, EE

EE- CSR Conference on JPRS

1. Representatives of EE met with successive groups representing the various CSR components on Thursday, 7 August, at M Building. The specific objective of the meeting was a review of EE contracts with JPRS (see Appendix A) to determine their interest and value to CSR components, and generally to review the FED contribution to the CSR effort. For a list of those attending the meeting, which ran from 0930 to 1600, see Appendix B.

2. In meeting with some groups the active JPRS contracts pertaining to Eastern Europe were reviewed individually; in some they were discussed in general terms according to subject. The following were some of the general comments made by those present:

Frequent concern was expressed over the kind and quality of guidance given to JPRS researchers, and the competence of JPRS researchers. It was pointed out that requirements were served upon JPRS for each contract, and that they were compiled in EE on the basis of written and oral requirements served on FED by various consumers; in many instances the completed requirements were referred to CSR for review and sterilization.

The factors determining which subjects and areas are covered by JPRS and which by EE were inquired into. Answers given were relative capability within EE and JPRS linguistically and topically, number of sources involved, and subject priority.

Numerous CSR analysts requested that JPRS reports be printed on one side of the page only, especially A4 Rex reports and those pertaining to specific industries. Some desire for a more complete table of contents in all reports was also expressed. Still others requested that all source information be noted on the page on which the information appears, instead of the end of the report.

Some discontent with JPRS translation of technical terms was voiced, and FED translations praised in this respect. EE agreed to ask that translation of difficult technical terms be followed by the original foreign word or phrase in parentheses.

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S/IR stated that 95% of the construction information on all Satellites was derived from overt sources.

Several CIA components agreed to accept dictaphone belts in lieu of some typed translations or review of periodicals.

A major criticism of the JPRS product appearing throughout the day concerned timeliness. It was pointed out that much of the information was too old to be of value by the time it appeared in a JPRS report, either because it had been obtained elsewhere in the meantime or had been superseded.

S/IR requested that where there is a backlog, JPRS exploit the latest sources first, e.g., July 1958 before June 1958.

S/IR stated specifically that they did not want research type reports, that all they wanted was "what the article said." This criticism was also received from others during the day. In this respect some desire was also expressed for FBD to do "research," while translations would be referred to JPRS.

An effort was made to determine the value to CIA of a translation of the East German statistical yearbook in particular and coverage of East German statistics in general. The results were somewhat inconclusive, although the preponderance of opinion pointed toward a definite need for the statistical yearbooks.

A/E stated that so much material was available on East Germany that no analyst could begin to use it intelligently. However, considerable doubt was voiced as to the value of as much as 9/10 of the covertly acquired material. This was coupled with numerous expressions of definite need for overt material.

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One CIA analyst present stated that he was receiving the press survey being done [redacted] He agreed to route his copy through the several CIA components for evaluation and forwarding to IR.

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3. Specific JPRS projects were commented on as follows:

W/AG agreed that JPRS could stop reporting on agriculture in the several native provincial press contents. However, Mr. [redacted] chief of W/AG, stated that he now has on hand a large 25X1A9a number of brochures and books on agriculture which he is very anxious to have translated. Materials have been sent to JPRS providing the agricultural parts of the contents; but no commitment was made to [redacted] as to the translations.

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Favorable response to contracts providing abstracts of official statistics was very widespread, with requests being made for coverage of more countries, especially Poland. It was also requested that items pertaining to trade and prices be given in more detail.

CER has little interest in the education and military projects, except for civil defense in the latter.

E/CER stated that there is little overt material available on communications, except in the statistical publications. They expressed a desire for contracts covering periodicals on this subject, particularly on Czechoslovakia and Poland.

E/TR expressed regret that transportation contracts contain sources from only one country, thus practically eliminating the international aspects of transportation. They stated that the bits and pieces type of reporting on this subject appearing in the FTD report on foreign trade was inadequate for their purposes.

E/FR suggested a contract on Czechoslovakia similar to the "Polish Iron and Steel Industry" contract, and inquired into more coverage on non-ferrous metals.

The Geography Branch voiced a need for more complete and thorough coverage of several countries, stating that they are now required to provide data for E/E use as well as E/S purposes.

4. The meeting as a whole was highly successful and mutually beneficial. [redacted] Office of the Chief E/E, suggestion that similar conferences be held on a semi-annual basis is one indication of the value of the present session. CER analysts were given an insight into the background, mechanics, problems, limitations, and potential of the JPRS operation. They were also encouraged to continue their critical evaluation of the JPRS program and products, as a needed assist in improving and shaping the JPRS to better meet the needs of CER and the rest of the intelligence community. 25X1A9a

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[redacted]

Acting Chief, E/FTD

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cc: [redacted] CER
Chief, Support Branch, FTD

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